

THE HISTORY OF THE HERITAGE ROSE GARDEN AT THE CYLBURN ARBORETUM

By Albert Ford

(adapted from the November – December 1999 MRS Newsletter)

The initial idea for the creation of a rose garden at the Cylburn Arboretum originated with Mrs. Frederic C. Lee of Baltimore, who arranged for a meeting with Mr. Gerald J. Moudry, then Chief Horticulturist of the Cylburn gardens. In attendance at the meeting held in the front room of the mansion in June, 1987, were Mrs. Lee, Mr. Moudry, Harry Bevard and Al Ford. At that time Mrs. Lee was a member and Consultant to the Maryland Rose Society, Harry Bevard was Past President and Executive Director of the Society, and Al Ford was a member of the Advisory Board. The Rose Garden space offered to the society by Mr. Moudry consisted of a plot of ground 36' X 24', just across the lane from the "All American Garden."

The first announcement of the possibility of a rose garden at Cylburn, specializing in Old Garden or Heritage Roses, was made to the membership of the Maryland Rose Society in an article which appeared in the July-Aug., 1987, issue of the Society's Newsletter, seeking the support and assistance of the membership. The proposed plan was discussed at the November, 1987 meeting of the Society, during which 13 members of the Society volunteered to assist in bringing the idea of a Heritage Rose Garden at Cylburn into fruition. A Heritage Rose Garden Committee was formed. Committee volunteers included (in alphabetical order), Harry Bevard, Nancy Boyce, Ellsworth Cadell, Holly Eiden, Al & June Ford, Adelaide Lee, Bob & Carolyn Lowe, Daria Phair, Olivia Rodgers, Bob & Laura Wade and Mary Wistuba.

Mr. Charles E. Bell of Alexander, VA, the designer of the Heritage Rose Garden at the National Arboretum, member of the Potomac Rose Society, Officer in the Colonial District of the American Rose Society and authority on Old Garden Roses, was contacted to assist in the planning and selection of rose varieties for the Cylburn Garden. At a meeting of the Committee on January 3, 1988, the decision was reached, after considerable discussion, to pursue the garden plan and varieties recommended by Mr. Bell who was in correspondence with Mr. Ford. The plan for the garden was approved by Mr. Moudry and Mrs. Jeanette Roos, President of the Cylburn Association, and the rose varieties were ordered from Pickering Nurseries in Ontario, Canada (with the exception of two China roses, not available from Pickering, which were ordered from Roses of Yesterday and Today in California). Each rose ordered was in conformance with the criteria approved by the committee that it qualified, by definition, as an Old Garden Rose, this meant that each rose was the result of a cross which produced a class of roses prior to 1867, the year of the introduction of the first Hybrid Tea, 'La France.' This activity was reported to the membership of the Maryland Rose Society in an article which appeared in the March-April, 1988, issue of the newsletter.

With the assistance of the Maryland Rose Society Committee members and personnel from Cylburn, the space for the garden was cleared, top soil spread over the area and the area tilled in preparation for the arrival of the rose plants. The space for each variety was designated by a white, numbered marker and planting instructions were prepared. The 28 rose plants were planted on March 20, 1988, by Rose Society committee members. The first printed diagram of the rose garden appeared in the March-April, 1989 issue of the Society's newsletter. By that time, the walkway had been installed by the committee and was reported also to the membership.

On Saturday, June 10, 1989, the Heritage Rose Garden was dedicated to the City of Baltimore and the people of the City. Maryland Rose Society President Dorothy E. Line made the

presentation and Mr. Jerry Blazek, of the Cylburn Staff, accepted on behalf of the City. Following the death of Mrs. Adelaide Lee in late 1993 at the age of 94, the Heritage Rose Garden at Cylburn was dedicated to her memory and renamed the 'Mrs. Frederic C. Lee Memorial Garden' in a ceremony held on June 25, 1995. Plaques of remembrance to Mrs. Lee and to Mrs. June Haller Ford were unveiled at the ceremony and both women were posthumously awarded the American Rose Society's Bronze Metal for their contributions to the Maryland Rose Society. Executive Director of the Society, Marcy Shawn Cowie, officiated at the event with many relatives and friends in attendance.

The Garden continues to be cared for by members of the Maryland Rose Society with the support of the Cylburn Arboretum Association. This brief history of the Maryland Rose Society's Heritage Rose Garden at the Cylburn Arboreum was prepared at the request of the Arboretum Association

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